

Prevent Poisonings

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Poison control centers across the nation receive more than 2 million calls each year about potential exposure to poisons.

Children are more likely to suffer serious consequences from poisoning than adults are, because they are smaller. Their bodies have faster metabolic rates and are less able to handle toxic chemicals. In fact, more than half of all poisonings occur in children under age 6.

Statistics show that 92% of poisonings happen at home. The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that most poisonings involve everyday household items such as cleaning supplies, cosmetics, personal care items and medicines.

To prevent accidental poisonings:

- Keep medication locked up, out of sight and out of reach.
- Teach your children to respect medication – don't ever refer to it as "candy."
- Teach children to ask before they eat or drink anything. Remember, poisons can look like food or drink.
- Keep the hotline number for the National Poison Control Center by every phone (1-800-222-1222).
- Keep a 1 ounce bottle of syrup of ipecac or activated charcoal on hand for each child, but only use it if instructed to do so by Poison Control Center staff or a medical professional.

Cleaning supplies, cosmetics, art supplies, certain plants, alcohol and other items can also pose a poisoning risk to children. Do a risk assessment of your home to identify which poisons are present and where they are located. Be sure to store all hazardous chemicals in locked cabinets out of a child's reach.

For more information about preventing poisonings, contact the Springfield-Greene County Health Department.